1	2
2001-02	60832
2002-03	67029
2003-04 (Provisional)	71367
2004-05 (Provisional)	74994

Exploration of copper by MECL

66. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Mineral Exploration Corporation Ltd. has carried out exploration for copper at Thanewasna (Maharashtra), Bhagal (Ph. II), Dholamala (Rajasthan) and Dhadkidih (Jharkhand);

(b) if so, the details of the work done so far;

(c) whether the commercial production of copper has commenced; and

(d) if not, by when it is likely to commence with annual capacity thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. [MECL has carried out exploration for copper at Thanewasna (Maharashtra). The work for copper ore exploration at Bhagal (Ph. II) in Rajasthan and Dhadkidih (Jharkhand) are in progress. The work in Dholamala (Rajasthan) for Copper has not started because of non-availability of forest permission.]

(b) The project-wise work done so far by MECL is given below:—

i. Thanewasna Copper (Maharashtra).

The exploration work was done from January 2004 to December 2004. A total of 2002m of drilling in 15 bore holes was carried out covering 1000m strike length and 200m vertical column from surface which was supported with geological and analytical work.

ii. Bhagal Phase-II (Rajasthan).

The work was commenced in December 2004. A total 2200m of drilling in 8 bore holes has been done with geological work, Sampling and analytical work are in progress. Earlier in Phase-I work, MECL estimated 5.53 million

tonnes with 0.76% Copper at 0.5% Copper cut-off over 900m strike length and vertical depth of 100m were estimated. The deposit appears to have open cast potentiality which will be confirmed by Phase-II work.

iii. Dhadkidih (Jharkhand).

The project commenced in December 2004. So far (upto June 2005) 2547m of drilling with matching geological work has been carried out & balance drilling sampling and analytical work are in progress. Work is aimed at proving the open cast potentiality of the deposit.

(c) No, Sir. [The MECL carries out only exploration activities and they are not venturing into commercial production of copper.]

(d) MECL has no plan to venture into commercial production of copper in near future.

Separate Ministry for Physically Handicapped

67. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that disabled rights group has been demanding for a separate Ministry for physically handicapped since their rights are being ignored;

(b) whether any representation has been received in this connection;

(c) if so, the steps taken/proposed to be taken thereon; and

(d) the facilities that Government propose to provide to the disabled through the recently released National Policy on Disability?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) There is no proposal to create a separate Ministry for persons with disabilities.

(d) A draft National Policy for Persons with Disabilities has been formulated and placed on the web site of the Ministry *viz.* www.socialjustice.nic.in for comments of the individuals/experts/non-governmental organizations.